

TACAW unites music, comedy, theater and community under one net-zero roof.

# ELECTRIC COMPANY

No longer in Aspen's culture shadow, Basalt showcases its creative side with TACAW, a green nonprofit performing arts center. BY TESS WEAVER

While Aspen once owned the lion's share of the arts and cultural scene in the Roaring Fork Valley, vibrant communities downriver, like Basalt and Carbondale, buzz with their own arts identity, offering everything from live music and comedy to theater and dance. Willits, a mixed-use neighborhood 5 miles down valley from Basalt, serves as a hub of artistic activities and expression and its anchor is TACAW (The Arts Campus at Willits), the nation's first net-zero, all-electric performing arts facilities. A loyal fan base has grown to expect diverse performances spanning music, comedy, films, live theater, lectures, children's programming and special events. TACAW has become an incubator for entertainment, culture, and community, and stands as a net-zero model for performing arts centers around the world.

We asked executive director Ryan Honey—who is also a performer, improv actor and producer—about the organization that shares his core values of play, creativity and collaboration. Before being part of a team building TACAW from the ground up, Honey served as director of special initiatives at Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles—one of the largest nonprofit theaters in the nation.

## What is TACAW's mission?

To present exceptional performing arts, community events and thought-provoking programming that connects and inspires the community. TACAW prides itself on being creative, inclusive and accessible. Our facility is also the

first net-zero performing arts center in the country; we are proud of this distinction.

## How does the programming differ from other venues?

As a nonprofit, we work hard to ensure the majority of our programming is low- or no-cost to our community. Last year, one-third of our shows were free. While there are numerous venues around the valley, including TACAW, where you might catch a Grammy Award winner or see a beloved comedian, nowhere can you find the breadth of programming we offer. And it is all priced for locals. We also offer a Youth Arts Pass, allowing tweens and teens to see select shows for free.

## What are you excited about this year?

I love our comedy series. I'm also excited to partner with Jazz at Lincoln Center to present "Great American Crooners" and to see Gregorian, featuring the songs of Enigma.

## How does TACAW support the community?

We have partnered with more than 100 nonprofit and community partners since opening. Elevating their work through our programming and venue is a critical part of our mission. Through these partnerships, we bring compelling content to the community that challenges audiences and makes them think. [tacaw.org](http://tacaw.org) 🌱

Courtesy of TACAW